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THIS ASTONISHING NATION

BY R. A. SCOTT-JAMES

HE was a tall, active, eager man, and his face bore a ludicrous resemblance to that of Mr. W. B. Yeats. He was a citizen of Detroit, and Detroit seemed to have absorbed his personality and taken him to itself.

“Have you an aquarium in London?” he asked, and scarcely waited till I asked if his own city was thus privileged.

“Oh my, yes, with real live salt-water fish. You’ve never been to Detroit? I reckon you’ve missed the finest city in America. There are very fine streets in Detroit; fine parks, avenues, rivers, canals, hotels, theaters, public buildings. . . .”

The catalogue ran on rapidly and inexhaustibly. “Have you got zoological gardens in London? Quite a number of fine beasts in Detroit: bears—grizzly bears, polar bears, black bears, brown bears, and wolves, jackals, hyenas, jaguars, spotted zebras. And what about chemical works in London? In Detroit? Oh, sure! The largest chemical works in the world. I’ve quite a number of fine views which I’d like you to see.”

I was allowed to gaze upon the spacious splendors of this city as represented in forty or fifty colored post-cards carefully addressed to my patriotic friend and inscribed, “ Lovingly, Monica.”

I regret that I have never been to Detroit and never seen this genial, eloquent, whole-hearted citizen in his proper Detroitian setting. And I have never been to Chicago, nor to San Francisco, Columbus, nor St. Louis, nor any of those Far Western cities every one of which is unique. In fact, I have been to America and missed seeing most of it. I never saw the Rocky Mountains nor the Colorado Desert nor the flood of the Mississippi, in which respect, it is true,

I resemble most of the inhabitants of eastern America. The territory, after all, is varied as well as large. The surface of it has been scratched in many places and in many ways, and the casual visitor must rely on what has been thrown conspicuously into view. One might almost as well describe one's impressions of the world as one's impressions of America.

We do not, of course, recollect our first impressions of the world; but if we imagine a well-educated gentleman from Mars versed in the literature of our planet, arriving here on a journey for business or pleasure, we may be sure that his first impressions would be vivid. He would think it well, perhaps, to postpone any pronouncement for a few days or weeks. Having descended upon Central Africa, he might hesitate to conclude that the civilization of this region was characteristic of our planet; he might withhold judgment until he had seen Peking and Detroit or even New York and London. But in any case his impressions would be interesting. He would do for the world what Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Hueffer, *et hoc genus omne* have done for America—he would arrive naïvely and famously among us; he would write a book entitled *You Worldlings* which would be eagerly read; he would win the credit of drawing from us a sort of planetary consciousness, a proud belief that we were all citizens of the world, of exciting our *orbic amour propre* till we were disposed to defend our fellow-worldsmen in the South Seas should he criticize their habit of tattooing. It might almost seem that Cairo was beginning to tolerate London and London ceasing to be jealous of Chicago on the day when this outspoken Martian challenged us all to community of feeling.

My own arrival in New York was unheralded. Indeed, I had been preceded by other Englishmen whose strange appearance in that city had occasioned as much excitement as the citizens could spare. But this did not check in me an uncanny feeling as if I had suddenly alighted upon the world. It was an actual fact that I had been living for years on a foggy island somewhere in the region of the Gulf Stream, an island full of old ruins and picturesque historical objects still inhabited but removed by nearly three thousand miles from the Continent—I mean the Continent of America. I was face to face with two-legged Americans who politely and at once asked me, “What do

you think of us?" "How do you like us?" "Is this at all what you expected?" It was not. I distinctly remember the first emotions of bewilderment and desolation, and the real relief I experienced on glancing at my legs and appreciating the fact that I also had two of them—that at least in this respect I resembled them. I record it as an unimportant but psychological fact that I was overjoyed at possessing the same number of legs as the average American.

It is a great thing to start from some point of community. I was glad that I could do so, for from the first I found myself out in all my reckonings, a stranger in a land extraordinarily foreign. Like everybody else in England, I had thought that I knew all about America without going there. I had taken my lesson from the American tourist, I had met other people's American relatives, I knew something of American literature, and I was not unacquainted with the worst as well as the best that America can do in fiction. I had my preconception of the American; I considered that perhaps I was equipped to understand him, though quite unfit to cope with him. All Englishmen think that there is only one type of him; and it is perfectly true that there is something in the English omnibus, in the English picture-gallery, in Stratford in the season and London out of the season, which call forth certain easily recognizable qualities from the transatlantic tourist—hilarity, self-confidence, a possessive air, the Americanism of the American in England, comparable to the proverbial Britishism of the Briton in Paris.

But that is only a single effect—the effect produced upon the New World when it is out on a voyage of discovery, returning upon the track of Columbus—treating us Britishers as our joint ancestors treated the red Indian. I soon found, as I said, that I was out in my calculations. Even my first distant glimpse of New York City was different from what I had expected. I knew that there were skyscrapers, but I had never been told that the sky-scrapers were like this. When somebody said, "Here is New York," I saw what appeared to be a dim mist in the sky resolving itself into a sort of mirage floating over the river and the land; and that again resolved itself into an incredible prodigy of brick and iron and stone, a huddle of towered buildings standing together like a monstrous, impossible

citadel, a creature to dream of as we dream of tidal waves and cataclysms. But it was real, almost insolently real, putting its mountainous, unassailable side foremost toward the river mouth and the sea, its Singer Tower, its Ten-Cent-Storeman's Tower, and all its other nameable giants rising, as it appeared, straight from the river, advertising at the first glance the sheer monstrosity of America, of the American metropolis, of American wealth. The romantic distant haze, suggestive and wonderful, had become this hard, concrete, powerful thing, astonishing, impressive, audacious.

At first I was assailed by the feeling: "This is advertisement; this is the New York way of saying, 'You have done everything else in the architectural line in Europe and Asia; you have invented Roman and Gothic styles; you have used every combination of square and round and pointed; you have created more beautiful things than the world needs, but you never, never thought or dreamed of anything like this; this is our unique America; we invented it; it will be the first thing you see as you sail upon us from the Atlantic.'"

That was how it first impressed me. And for the moment it was no use reasoning with myself and saying that they had to build upward because they lived on a long, narrow island and had no way of expanding excepting toward the sky. There it was, impressive, prodigious, marvelous, everything that can stir the sense of wonder without creating the impression of beauty. And I was for the moment rash enough and unreasoning enough to stigmatize it as successful advertisement, advertisement so successful as to seize even the imagination; and I did not give sufficient weight to the undesignedness of the whole mass, the unconscious symbolism of this heterogeneous collection of business buildings, presenting, by the chance of collocation, the appearance of a whole.

For all cities worthy of the name, cities that are more than mere agglomerations of people, have contrived somehow, by accident or design, to put forward some monument symbolic of their character and culture, of that which wins respect and veneration there. Athens achieved this end designedly in the Acropolis, where her citadel of defense contained also the symbols of her religion and art. In the older cities of England the most conspicuous objects were the castles and the churches. The Tower of London, St.

Paul's, and Westminster Abbey dominated the first view of medieval London from the river, and modern London thrust forward its Houses of Parliament and its official buildings, symbols of its politics and its bureaucracy. Paris has thrust forward the Louvre to vie with Notre Dame in its dominance of the Seine. And it is by the same unconscious impulse, I suppose, that New York, having none of the religiosity of Philadelphia or Boston, having no respect for politics, like London, and no excessive respect for art, like Paris, has made prominent, not its cathedral or its political buildings or its art-galleries, but its business houses and its colossal advertisements.

But just as I am on the verge of pronouncing that the citizens of New York are absorbed in business a dulcet message from the West, beautifully typed on beautiful paper, comes to me, knocking the wind out of my sails. "I suppose you are back on your native heath and hard at work composing delightfully critical comments on our country." After that I shrink from verdicts, and especially from so banal a pronouncement as that the men of New York are absorbed in business. I do not know whether they are or not. But I do observe that the *idea* of business—business as a phantasmal and recurrent item in conversation—is dangled before the eyes and ears of the unwary visitor. But, thanks to my American correspondent and his timely distrust of my impressions, I am led to look back at the bias which directs our English view of the American "business" atmosphere; to remember that England, which is as much a nation of shopkeepers as ever it was, has never ceased to be slightly ashamed of the fact. It is part of our English tradition to maintain a large leisured class which, though deprived of the honorable duties of government and patronage and now largely plebeian in its origin, has not ceased to be decorative and is still the zenith of social ambition. This social ambition penetrates English life. None but the class of manual laborers has escaped it. Each class emulates the class socially above it. Each circle seeks to protect its social prestige by a jealous exclusiveness, and each aspires to an ideal of dignified leisure. The new democratic spirit is only beginning to break down these ring fences so austere preserved amid the débris of the Victorian era. No wonder English visitors are impressed by the "business" pride of New York, coming, as they do,

from a country where a man's ambition is to do nothing to a country where a man's ambition is to have too much to do.

Here we strike a real difference, a difference in illusions. I do not suppose that the average American gets through more work than the average Englishman, though most of my American critics will tell me that he does. The difference is that an American seems to respect primarily the business by which he makes his money, whereas the Englishman seems to respect the hobby by which he loses it. Both of them, of course, are alike in wanting to have as much money as they can possibly get; but while the American respects the process of getting it, the Englishman has been taught to be ashamed of it. The tiresome vain-glory of the one contrasts with the conventional hypocrisy of the other. The American should make allowances for the Englishman who may be betrayed into irritation at this interest in business before the latter has learned that it amounts almost to an artistic instinct. For you cannot be long in New York without observing that business has been actually embellished with that loving care which is akin to the care of the artist. I have been taken through offices organized to a point of efficiency which must be highly unremunerative. One is assured that millions of dollars are spent upon labor-saving appliances, which clearly satisfy the business instincts of directors on their artistic side—by which I imply their disinterested love of efficiency for its own sake. I venture to utter a conviction—*pace* my above-mentioned correspondent—when I say that this love of the machine is bred in the bone of the average American. College life, so far from destroying it, as it generally does in England, fosters it in America. A group of young men from Harvard and Yale, who for two days were my fellow-voyagers on a small ship, revealed, each and all of them, an almost passionate interest in the details of machinery which in later life doubtless will reappear in the organization of their offices as a punctilious feeling for instruments of efficiency.

If I am right in supposing that for most Americans business is not merely a profession, but a source of interest almost artistic in the sense that it is a pursuit adopted as much for its own sake as for its rewards, then it becomes easy to understand their seeming indifference to general ideas, their apparently limited imagination, their air of

being unexposed to emotion. For a century and a half they have been developing their country's natural resources—which at first they were apt to regard as inexhaustible. Industry and commerce have become the obvious national affair; it was inevitable that they should begin by putting their genius into business and all that pertains to business. I have listened to the general talk in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, and more than once to groups of farmers in country places, and again and again I found that just as the conversation in England is apt to come round to national and local politics, so in America men come to speak of the great millionaires or the local business celebrities. A barber in Boston who was holding forth to a group of commercial travelers was explaining that a certain person was a very close friend of a certain other person. "But he would not let friendship interfere with business. And," he added, with an air of finality, "one can't." The sentiment was approved. It was obviously a point of honor to keep business sacred from the violations of personal feeling. A clever lady whose culture was as much European as American told me that, according to her experience, men found it hard to get away from business; that they clung to it even when they were past the age of work; that in consequence they had few resources in themselves and were at a loss as to how to spend their leisure. But she added that the younger generation was keen on golf, baseball, and other games, and that this athletic interest was sure to make a difference.

And here we have the admitted reason why politics in the States is so much a question of finance. For all excepting the classes engaged in manual labor, among whom there is growing up a broad and generous conception of the State, political rights seem to be little valued excepting in so far as they confer economic opportunity. Roosevelt is careful to appeal to individual ambition as well as public sentiment when he says "our demand is that big business give the people a square deal and that the people give a square deal to any man engaged in big business who honestly endeavors to do what is right and proper." Every one, of course, must do what is right and proper, but rectitude and propriety must not destroy the chance, which every one possesses, of becoming a Rockefeller; the "strenuous life" and the "square deal" presuppose that Rockefeller is the

public ideal; and good politics must keep in view a nation composed exclusively of Rockefellers. In spite of his appeal to public sentiment and the common good, I am told that the Socialists, at any rate, will not be pleased with Roosevelt so long as he retains the popular motto of the "square deal"—which means a fair distribution of the license to cut throats.

The admiration which Theodore Roosevelt draws from, perhaps, the large majority of the people seems to lend color to the prevalent English idea of the gullibility of the American. That is an English mistake. I admit that I cannot myself understand why Mr. Roosevelt should be described as "magnetic." I have from my own observation seen that he is untiring; that he has an unending fund of vivacity; that by his extraordinary physical vitality he is able to maintain from morning to night an exuberance of spirits, a capacity for continued enthusiasm in rhetoric and invective, a rollicking air of school-boyish fun and vehemence; that he can provide a roaring theatrical entertainment which would delight any proletarian crowd in the world. But this is not what we generally mean by "magnetism," for his art of impressing lacks the subtlety and depth which we should associate with the word; it seems to spring from no hidden force of intellectual and moral power; he is not, in fact, "impressive," as was his far more subtle prototype, Abraham Lincoln. But I have talked with many Americans who, though not in the least carried away by his "magnetism," are none the less ready to lend him their support; who admit his crudity, but think it useful that crude facts should be crudely stated; who are aware of his vanity and egotism, but believe that those very qualities insure his honesty; who welcome his restlessness, his unconventionality, his headstrong impulsiveness, because these are the very qualities which are generally lacking in political, legal, and official circles, where only by something the opposite of red-tape is it possible to get things done.

And many even of those who do not agree with him admire his generosity, his quick sympathy, his kindly, impressionable disposition, and the very swiftness of his unpremeditated acts. Here is a nature which, with all its appearance of strength, may be easily swayed; but it will be swayed by what is personal, human, and for the most part generous.

And if I may seem to be writing in too free a manner about the people of America, criticizing, as it were, the very hospitality which they extended to me, ungrateful, as it might appear, for the innumerable kindnesses which I received, I would beg my personal friends at least to remember that I have tried to detach myself, as I did when I conversed with them, from those individual relationships which are very real, which ought to be a modifying factor in any general judgment, but cannot be the main basis of one's impressions of a country. Moreover, in arriving hesitatingly at certain preliminary conclusions, I know how much I owe to the frankness of certain Americans who spoke to me in criticism of their country. To these I owe a debt of which I am sensible, and when this article is finished I trust they will not think I owe them an apology.

So far as "gullibility" is concerned, it is certainly the American who often scores off the Englishman. There are people in England who think that America exists for the sole purpose of fêting celebrated authors and providing them with royalties. (For the benefit of American readers I may say that these people are only found in London literary circles.) Some time ago I asked an English author well known in the States for what purpose he was about to visit America, and a lady novelist snubbed me with the remark, "Why, to be lionized, of course." Poor Mr. X! He was received with all that hospitality for which Americans are famous; they gave him dinners and lunches; his publisher took him about like a menagerie and collected genial "high-brow" audiences to be entertained by him—and instead of talking he sat horribly silent. It is recorded against him to this day that he would not talk!

English authors who propose to be fêted in America must learn to talk, and they may talk about anything in the world so long as they do it in a genial, vivacious, and preferably boisterous manner. But, above all, let them beware of affectation, or any trick of personality which may pass for affectation. Mr. W. B. Yeats, for example, would have done well to have committed the sin of silence rather than to have betrayed to the mercies of the American humorist those poetical gestures, that beautiful earnestness, that grand manner which make him an object of adoration only on his own side of the Atlantic.

This intolerance of affectation, which may often blind peo-

ple to real merit, is surely in itself a particularly healthy thing. One cannot fail to be struck by those very genuine democratic qualities in Americans which make them ridicule any attempt to gain personal distinction by adventitious aids. Wealth is the only adventitious aid which must be excepted, for wealth, in this practical business community, is a badge of merit, the insignia of power; and to be ostentatious about money is to understand the first business principle of conspicuous advertisement. If you are rich enough to own a sky-scraper you can reside in a hovel and live as simply as Mr. Rockefeller; if you are not, then, I am told, you cannot afford to stay at any but the most expensive hotel. But this sort of display, this chimera of prosperity, belongs to that artistry of business which I have already mentioned. The appearance of wealth is, at any rate, the appearance of a good thing. The appearance of gentility, without the solid hall-mark of wealth, is for the American the most detestable of frauds; and no man who is not rich would dare to say that his ancestors came over in the *Mayflower*. Not that the American positively objects to what we should call "good breeding," but wherever breeding tends to pass into mannerism or "side" it arouses his hostility. They have never had a feudal system in the States, and they have therefore no effete survival of feudalism. There is no such thing among them as an hereditary right to be insolent. Patronage or a patronizing manner toward the "lower classes" is not tolerated, for there are no upper and lower classes; there are only rich and poor, and the poor man of to-day is the rich man of to-morrow; and a rich man is far too proud of his fortune-making talents to be ashamed of the fact that once he was poor. No American would be idiotic enough to say, as I have heard an English lady say, "What I complain of in the poor is their ingratitude." The characteristic American view was put to me by a rich lady who said, "One thing I must complain of in you English: the low wages you pay to agricultural laborers." There are plenty of English people who still think that it is the virtue of the poor to be content that they were ordained by God to be poor; but every American thinks that it is the virtue of the poor to grow rich.

For here, in these vast States of America, there was a country waiting to be occupied and exploited. The wealth was potentially there; it needed nothing but labor and

energy to realize it; the economic conditions fostered a spirit of equality which would not recognize any difference but in energy, will-power, and strength. The poor man has never suffered from the social handicap which holds him back in the Old World. His labor was needed. There was little to distinguish him from those for whom he worked. In time he too might join the employing class and climb up on the shoulders of others. Immigrants arriving from Ireland, Italy, Poland, and all the underfed or overcrowded countries of the world may at first offer their bodies and their muscles to the sweater. But they too are soon caught by the spirit of America and are drawn into it. The vivifying air, the atmosphere of emulation, the infection of competitive energy stimulate them also and turn them into real Americans as tough, as callous, as capable as all the rest. By thousands and tens of thousands they pour in—these raw, inexperienced recruits—and America drills and hammers them till all the callowness, the softness, and the useless gentleness is knocked out of them, and their very jowls grow heavier, their eyes harder, their emotions less troublesome.

I have been through slums in Boston and Philadelphia, and I have spent hours in that noisome, hidden region of New York which surpasses in horror even the worst that London can show. But they are mostly inhabited by these poor foreigners who have come out here to make their fortunes; who seldom disfigure by their presence the streets in which they do not live or work. Outside these grim regions one is impressed by the apparent prosperity and brightness of the people. It seemed to me that the average working-man was, on the whole, better off than a man of the corresponding class in England. In New York, it is true, I found it a rare thing to see men's faces that did not wear hard-set expressions; their eyes seemed fixed on a near and narrow point. Those expressionless, cold-blooded faces were so abundant in the streets and even the clubs that I shall always think of New York as the chilliest place I ever stayed in—and this notwithstanding the boisterous, hospitable, "hail-fellow-well-met" air with which you are invariably greeted. There are many individuals to whom I personally have reason to be grateful; but if I may leave them out of account, it struck me that the exaggerated courtesy and polite punctilio which every Englishman must

notice had possibly the same cause as that to which, when I was in Macedonia, a consul attributed the polite manners of the inhabitants, "They have to be very polite to avoid the necessity of shooting one another." But in Boston, Philadelphia, and other smaller towns where, if I observed rightly, this hard expression and apparent absorption of attention were no longer prevalent, it seemed to me that the working classes were not only fairly prosperous, but far more cheerful, more intelligent, more interested in life than the corresponding classes in England. And in general, among all those people who are evidently free from business responsibility, who may be junior employees of one kind or another, one notices an alertness, an interest in life, a hopefulness which contrast with the anxious, jaded expression so commonly seen in English cities. I do not know whether, when the increased cost of living is taken into account, these people are really better paid than in England. But they are better educated, they have more opportunities, there is room for hope, and they have the heart to create for themselves a standard of living.

It seemed to me that the women employees whom one sees in business offices, in tea-shops, or traveling in cars were of a higher average type than the men. The woman who "works" is respected in America; she commands a good wage; she apparently proves very efficient without having all the fineness of her sex driven out of her. She is decently educated, she is not desperately overworked, and she conforms to the American feminine fashion of improving her mind—a fashion which the man admires without imitating. In the wealthier classes, as in every country, this habit of improving the mind is apt to produce the *femme savante*. One man told me proudly that his wife was always studying, always gaining information on new subjects of information. He enumerated the languages she had mastered, the various physico-chemical sciences she had exhausted, the poets whom she had learned by heart, and the philosophies she was about to add to her repertoire. I have felt that some of these cultured American women who know everything are often not only the least likable, but also the least intelligent.

But the little game of culture which penetrates to the working classes has a sort of *naïveté* not without charm, though I can imagine it might be tiresome at close quarters.

I remember snatches of a conversation which I overheard between a young man and woman who sat next to me one evening on the boat which plies between Boston and Nantasket Beach. The girl was apparently a waitress at a tea-shop. The man was a workman who had been in the army. The former confesses that she keeps a diary. She keeps it regularly. Does he keep one? No, but he did when he was in the army. It is a pity, she thinks, that he does not keep it now, for they might have compared notes. He is not very responsive and obviously considers that this literary craze is commendable but inconvenient. I know no more of the affair. But evidently already this little pride of fineness which was offended, this petty subtlety which was neglected, had interposed just the slightest barrier in the love-making. Perhaps the man was right to be impatient. Anyway, it was a small matter. But these small matters may account for a woman's dissatisfaction even for a sense of superiority.

And putting aside altogether the question of class, that sense of superiority of woman over man is, I believe, a very common feeling in America. Women may be vain, but they are not often really conceited, and their evidence in a matter of this sort is worth considering. I will not attempt to record such scanty evidence as I was in a position to collect. I should distrust any conclusions I might be tempted to form on so difficult a subject. I may remark that an elderly New England gentleman, whom I revere, informed me that American women are freer in their social relations with men than any women in the world, but that their morals are beyond reproach. This praise did not astonish me, but I thought that perhaps "quite a little"—as my Detroit friend would have said "quite a little"—of the praise should be given to the men.

It may be that the women, being better read, and therefore in ideas more modern and cosmopolitan, are more self-conscious than the men; that they are more introspective, more various in their sentiment, therefore less easily satisfied by what is offered, being ready to give what in America it is denied that they should receive. However that may be, it is quite certain that, at any rate, the men possess a quality only to be found in young races or new countries—lack of self-consciousness. This is particularly noticeable in the young men of the colleges. The Oxford

or Cambridge undergraduate is absorbed in himself and conscious of himself, and it is for this reason that the modern young Englishman between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two is often so unbearable. But the average boy at Harvard or Yale—and I have had special opportunities of noticing—does not appear to be in a half-baked state of transition between school-boy and man. He is still a boy whose strength and animal spirits have simply increased, who expresses his exuberant emotions without shame or restraint. He will laugh, sing, leap, or dance as the spirit moves him, and there will be no self-consciousness to dictate decorum or reserve. And when these youths have left college and have grown a little older there is still nothing to show that they have passed through stages of transition; they are the same save that they are a little older, a little less physically exuberant, a little shrewder, a little more business-like.

A nation of men free from the burden and the responsibility of self-consciousness, having the directness and the spontaneity of young school-boys—here surely there is something which we shall never regain in Europe till our civilization is broken up. However crude and unreflective these crowds of grown-up boys may be—and sometimes I seem to see them in crowds—it is wonderful to observe their exuberance, their ready enthusiasms, their energy, and even their restlessness. And if they have no personal self-consciousness, they have that consciousness of the *institution* which is so strong in school-boys, the institution of America. One marvels to find so many people, extraordinarily ignorant of Europe and European history, who have inherited the civilization and the ideas of Europe without being aware of it, and assuredly without being grateful for it, whose minds think in terms of America and the American nation. It is extraordinary that a country so vast and so varied should be so constantly in their thoughts, should arouse so ardent a sense of nationality and ceaselessly inspire them to demonstrative patriotism. Little as they think of themselves as individuals, they are always thinking of America and the Americans. They are impressed with their own size, confident of their own achievements, assured of their future dominance of the world. As the Romans in the days of the still uncorrupted republic first disdained and then patronized the Greeks, so the Americans first disdained and

have now reached the stage of patronizing the English. They will visit us to see our country and our buildings, certainly not ourselves. To adorn their robust republic they will carry away a little of our decadent art and culture or lead about one of our picturesque poets. They ask to be criticized, being confident that they ought to be praised. They have no doubts about themselves; they have the courage of conviction; they see their vast, irresistible republic growing over the hemisphere, shaping and making the new civilization of the world.

This energetic patriotism, this unwavering belief in themselves as a nation, is one of the qualities which lend such interest to their development. They are well aware that they are in a state of rapid transition, that they are growing into something monstrous and powerful; and it is not the few who talk about their growth, but the men and women everywhere, rich and poor, Americans of long lineage, Americans but recently absorbed. I doubt if they have moved so far from the days of Whitman and the Civil War as they are supposed to have moved. Even in those days they displeased the prejudiced Dickens; even to-day they are surely capable of shouting with Whitman the song of the "tan-faced children." Their imagination is still occupied with the felling of primeval forests, the stemming of rivers, the upheaving of virgin soil; and the transition to the stock-market is not so very great. It is the next transition which will interest us more—the coming of age of this astonishing nation.

R. A. SCOTT-JAMES.